

# Raoul Wallenberg Congressional Gold Medal Designs Unveiled

May 9, 2013

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew today unveiled the designs of the Raoul Wallenberg Congressional Gold Medal during a ceremony held in the Department of the Treasury's historic Cash Room. King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden were present for the event, along with Congressman Gregory Meeks. The final medal, which was authorized by Public Law 112-148, will be presented in a future ceremony on Capitol Hill in recognition of Wallenberg's achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

In his [remarks](#), Secretary Lew said, "As many of you know, the Congressional Gold Medal is one of this nation's highest civilian awards, bestowed on individuals who have made a lasting impact on American history and culture. Only 31 foreign citizens have been recognized in this way. Of course, we all know the unique story of Raoul Wallenberg. His remarkable heroism, in risking his own life to rescue thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust, is the reason that we are here to celebrate his legacy and unveil the medal's design."

Raoul Wallenberg was born on August 4, 1912, in Sweden. After graduation from the University of Michigan, he returned to Sweden where he began a career as a businessman and later as a Swedish diplomat. While working at the Holland Bank, Wallenberg began to meet young Jews who had been forced to flee from Nazi persecution in Germany. Working with the War Refugee Board, Wallenberg helped save more than 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust, many of whom later immigrated to the United States. Today, hundreds of thousands of American Jews can directly or indirectly attribute their own lives to Wallenberg's heroic actions. Indeed, many of the people Wallenberg saved have been influential citizens contributing to American institutions and culture. Wallenberg's ultimate fate remains a mystery. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan made him an honorary U.S. citizen, an honor that had only previously been extended to Winston Churchill.

The medal's obverse (heads side) will feature a close-up portrait of Wallenberg. Inscriptions on the obverse will be *RAOUL WALLENBERG, ACT OF CONGRESS 2012*, and *HERO OF HEROES*.

The medal's reverse (tails side) will depict Wallenberg's view as he extends a Schutz-pass and a background view of those he could not reach being boarded on a train bound for a concentration camp. Inscriptions on the medal's reverse will include *HE LIVES ON FOREVER THROUGH THOSE HE SAVED* around the upper border and *ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE* beneath the Schutz-pass. Bronze reproductions of the medal, also authorized by Public Law 112-148, will be available for purchase from the United States Mint at a later date.

The Raoul Wallenberg Congressional Gold Medal obverse design is by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Don Everhart, and the reverse design is by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Phebe Hemphill. Both Sculptor-Engravers will execute the respective obverse and reverse designs.

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